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Postoje k mateřskému jazyku ve středoanglickém období na základě
korpusových excerpčí

Corpus based description of attitudes to native language in the Middle English
period

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Poděkování

Touto cestou bych chtěla poděkovat všem, kteří mi umožnili napsat tuto bakalářskou práci. Dík patří především mému vedoucímu Mgr. Ondřeji Tichému, bez něhož by se mé bádání v žádném případě neobešlo. Dále bych chtěla poděkovat všem zástupcům ÚAJD, kteří mne poslední tři roky neustále obohacovali a motivovali k dalšímu studiu. V neposlední řadě patří poděkování také mým rodičům, jejichž trpělivost a pomoc byla nedocenitelná.

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně, že jsem řádně citovala všechny použité prameny a literaturu a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

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Abstract

Middle English is a form of English that was spoken between the late 12th and the late 15th century, which corresponds to the historical High Middle Ages in England. The term 'Middle' reflects its position between two very different stages of English development, the earlier Old English period, and the later Early Modern English period. At the beginning of the Middle English period English is an almost impenetrable West Germanic language that must be learned, whereas at the end the language used is very close to Modern English.

Even though later stages of English development are very thoroughly described by the contemporary speakers, it is harder to find any textual reference about the language of the Middle English period. Therefore, the focus of this work was to find such references that would reveal additional information about the state and attitudes towards the English language at that time.

Using previous studies done by historical linguists as the main resource, the theoretical part introduces Middle English, its structure and external historical context. It serves as an informative background for the practical part that follows. The research was conducted by examining a corpus of Middle English texts using a corpus management software. The program enables keyword-based search in the corpus for parts of individual texts that are in some way relevant to the topic of this work.

The results were analyzed and further sorted into different categories according to the nature of their linguistic commentary. To aid in presenting a more comprehensive picture of contemporary attitudes to native language, additional commentaries were presented, which were taken from additional secondary sources: Middle English Dictionary and *The History of the English Language* by Albert Baugh and Thomas Cable.

Střední angličtina představuje podobu anglického jazyka, jíž se mluvilo v pozdním středověku v Anglii, tedy v období, které se datuje zhruba od konce dvanáctého do konce patnáctého století. Angličtina tohoto období se nazývá střední také proto, že stojí mezi dvěma velmi odlišnými vývojovými fázemi anglického jazyka, starým a raně moderním obdobím. Střední angličtina je také zajímavá tím, že na jejím začátku se setkáváme s jazykem, jehož struktura je natolik odlišná, že je ji rodilí mluvčí moderní angličtiny musejí studovat podobně jako cizí jazyk, a ke konci jejího vývoje nacházíme angličtinu velmi podobnou té současné.

Ačkoli pozdější vývojová stadia angličtiny jsou velmi podrobně popsána dobovými mluvčími daných fází tohoto jazyka, o střední angličtině z pohledu jejích mluvčích mnoho známo není. Cílem této studie je tedy se pokusit vyhledat a popsat takové dobové komentáře, které by podhalily postoje rodilých mluvčích k mateřskému jazyku ve středoanglickém období.

Tato práce je strukturována do dvou větších celků, kde úvodní část práce slouží hlavně jako podklad pro navazující výzkumnou část. Teoretický úvod se zabývá především popisem struktury střední angličtiny a zasazuje ji do kontextu anglické historie. Informace pro tuto část pocházejí především z již publikovaných prací na téma historie anglického jazyka. Výzkumná část se zabývá analýzou korpusu středoanglických textů prostřednictvím korpusového manažeru. Tento program pomocí klíčových slov umožňuje vyhledávání takových částí textu, které určitým způsobem souvisejí s tématem této práce.

Výsledky korpusové excerptce jsou analyzovány a dále zařazeny do širších tematických kategorií podle obsahu jejich sdělení. Aby byl obraz soudobého přístupu k jazyku ještě ucelenější, další komentáře byly převzaty ze sekundárních zdrojů, především ze *Středoanglického slovníku (Middle English Dictionary)* a *Historie anglického jazyka (History of the English Language)* od autorů Alberta Baugha a Thomase Cablea.

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List of Abbreviations:

OE	Old English
ME	Middle English
PDE	Present Day English
MED	Middle English Dictionary

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1. Introduction

The history of the English language is a complex topic that spans over 1,500 years of evolution and spreads across several continents. The beginnings of English are however tied to just one specific place, England. Although England is today mainly associated with English, it should not be forgotten that the history of this particular language is not identical with the language history of England itself. The latter is much longer. England was previously inhabited for thousands of years by a number of cultures and each of those cultures had a language of their own (Baugh, 2002: 38). English, the last of these languages, arrived with the invading Germanic tribes about the middle of the fifth century.

Nevertheless, the focus of this thesis is not the earliest stage of the English history, but the one closely following, the period of so-called Middle English. Firstly, it should be pointed out that language development is a continuous a process, and any attempt at periodization should be considered arbitrary and a matter of convenience (Baugh, 2002: 46). Despite this fact, such divisions have proven very useful, especially if the focus is just on one segment of the general history. Because the matter is not simple, however, a larger part of the theoretical introduction of this study is dedicated to defining and describing the specific characteristics of the Middle English period that give reasons as to why it should be considered alone.

The second part of this study, to which the first part serves as an introduction, is more practical and will examine the contemporary attitudes toward the English language in the Middle English period. Even though typically less prominent in the linguistics studies, “beliefs about the status of a language – including its social meanings, its uses, and its speakers – have histories, too” (Machan, 2003: 2). Therefore, the aim is to find any comments that would reveal more about the social history of English in the Middle English period, describe them and subsequently look for any general themes that would connect them.

However, the present research is restricted by several facts that are accurately summed up by Tim William Machan:

“The history of a language’s social meanings and functions is made more complicated, since it confronts not only the gaps in the historical record but also the fact that much of the linguistic self-consciousness that motivated individuals to write about sociolinguistic issues seem to have been more recent than the advent of print” (2003: 4).

To compensate for the lack of primary sources that would inform us in detail about the state of the language, such as grammars of the Early Modern period, we decided to analyze a sample of literary texts written in the Middle English period. The objective is to look for any secondary or accidental comments made by the contemporary writers that were, perhaps, not as important for the contents of their books, but are meaningful for this study. Provided enough commentaries, conclusions will be drawn that will hopefully improve the knowledge about the attitudes towards the language or at least confirm out existing knowledge.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 The Definition of the Middle English Period

The Middle English period is usually roughly dated between 1100 and 1500, which corresponds to the historical High Middle Ages in England. The language used and spoken during these three hundred years displays such marked grammatical and lexical differences from its predecessor, Old English, that it can no longer be viewed as the same English. An example of one of the differences is the leveling of endings. Old English employed numerous inflectional paradigms for the noun, the verb and the adjective. In the Middle English period, however, analogical levelling and phonetic reduction lead to leveling of inflections and therefore to the reduction/simplification of the inflectional paradigms. This trend continued to develop further and reached its climax in the Early Modern English period, when, with few exceptions, we can speak about a general loss of inflections (Baugh, 2002: 46).¹

The development of Middle English was, apart from the structural changes, also influenced by other extra-linguistic factors, such as political or social changes. For example, the arrival of the Normans undoubtedly had a major effect on the Anglo-Saxon population and on the language they spoke. As Lass mentions: “the history of [language] speakers is part - and an important part - of the total picture of the history of a language” (1987: 35).

These unique characteristics and developments could be roughly characterized as having two origins: external and internal. Therefore we can speak of any language having two histories: “The internal history is that of the language itself - its sound system, grammar, etc. But languages are spoken by communities which themselves have histories; and these interact with the purely internal evolution of their languages. This is external history²” (Lass, 1987:

¹ Some of the changes characteristic of the Middle English period were new; a result of the Conquest of England by the Norman army led by William the Conqueror and the new conditions which were established by it - in a sense that it removed the conservative influences that are felt when a language is extensively used in official standard and as a cultural medium (Baugh, 2002: 146). Nevertheless, other changes were a continuation of processes that had already begun in Old English, such as the development of articles or the loss of inflectional endings. Leveling of endings, which was mentioned above, for example, can be traced as early as the tenth century (Malone, 1930: 110-17, quoted in Baugh, 2002: 147). The situation is, as can be seen, not that simple and some generalization is necessary to make certain general trends more visible.

² Lass later further comments on the nature of the external history: “it's important to note that except for lexical borrowing, there is little if anything in the external history of a language that can be said to 'cause' internal events in any direct way” (Lass, 1987: 34-35). However, this statement is problematic in its absolute exclusion of any direct effect of external events on the structure. Lass later in the text himself admits a possibility of outer influence, in this case of Old Norse, on the syntactical structure of Old English. He writes: “There is even one possible syntactic Scandinavism in English: the ability to ‘strand’ prepositions at the end of relative clauses, as in *the car he was in*: cf. The Swedish equivalent, *bilen som hann var i* ‘car-the relative-marker he was in’ (Lass, 1987: 54). There is no means of proving the degree of influence external events had, be it large or marginal. It is

34). Based on this distinction between internal and external histories made by Lass, it is possible to further specify the Middle English period.

2.1.1 External History: The Conquest

*Bus com, lo, Engelond in-to Normandies hond:
And þe Normans ne couþe speke þo bote hor owe speche,
And speke French as hii dude atom, and hor children dude also teche,
So þat heiemen of þis lond, þat of hor blod come,
Holdeþ alle þulke speche þat hii of hom nome;
Vor bote a man conne Frenss me telþ of him lute.
Ac lowe men holdeþ to Engliss, and to hor owe speche zute.
Ich wene þer ne beþ in al þe world contreyes none
þat ne holdeþ to hor owe speche, bote Engelond one.
Ac wel me wot uor to conne boþe wel it is,
Vor þe more þat a mon can, þe more wurþe he is.*

The Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester, 1300

From the historical point of view and hence the view of the external history, the Middle English period is traditionally framed by several historical events that steered the course of England's history into a new direction. The beginning of the Middle English period was essentially defined by the Conquest of England by William the Bastard in 1066, which effectually put an end to the domestic rule by English aristocracy and installed a new foreign Norman dynasty on the English throne. While the social historians view this occurrence as indeed tragic for the native Anglo-Saxons population, historical linguists tend to interpret this event and its consequences in different ways. Some tend to describe the Conquest as having cataclysmic effect on the English language similar to that on the English aristocracy³. This

only possible to state that there was an influence and therefore external history should be included when trying to describe thoroughly a language history.

³ Lass quotes Baugh to support his statement of cataclysmic interpretation. He writes, "The received view is that it was cataclysmic: it 'changed the whole course of the English Language' (Baugh 1957: 127). However, after reading the whole chapter on the Conquest in Baugh's *A History of the English Language*, it cannot be sufficiently argued that Baugh's view is completely cataclysmic. He stresses the importance of the French as the language of aristocracy, government and the royal family, but otherwise gives support to what Lass labels as the "revisionist view." At the beginning of the chapter he admits that not all changes are caused by Conquest and that some changes were already taking place in Old English. Furthermore, he concedes that the majority of

interpretation views English as being essentially ousted from its dominant position by a new prestigious language, French. There is also an opposing 'revisionist' view that argues against this suggested marginalization of the English language (Lass, 1987: 55). However, no matter how these contrary approaches may differ, the evidence they are based upon is the same and the opposing views are only a matter of interpretation. The main issue is that there is no direct evidence of the situation at that time. Only scarce textual (and secondary) evidence is available to researchers. Moreover, this evidence is biased, as the main literary production was almost exclusively related to the upper class or the church. Therefore, it is impossible to accurately determine the state of the English language at this time. However, it is possible to present the facts that are supported by evidence that most linguists agree upon.

Before William crossed the channel with the numerous vessels carrying his host, the linguistic situation in England was as follows: There existed a variety of local dialects, out of which West Saxon had emerged as a dominant standard due to its higher political prestige and cultural influence. In short we could speak of the forming and dissemination of a written standard in the late Old English period. Furthermore, English of that time was the only vernacular of Europe that was used in written communication as well as in official documents and culturally important literary texts such as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Had this situation not been interrupted, Baugh (2002: 98) assumes that "[English] would probably have pursued much the same course as the other Germanic languages, retaining perhaps more of its inflections and preserving a predominantly Germanic vocabulary, adding its word-stock by the characteristic methods of word formation already explained, and incorporating words from other languages much less freely." Nevertheless, the situation had changed with the arrival of a foreign claimant to the throne; English was substituted by French as the culturally dominant language and West Saxon lost its position of a standard and became just one out of many dialects again.

One of the most important results of William's campaigns in the years following the battle of Hastings was that he essentially purged the English aristocracy. Following that the whole upper class including the royal court became French speaking only (Baugh, 2002: 101). Peasantry, which according to Lass constituted upwards of 80% of the population, remained English speaking (Lass, 1987: 56; Baugh, 2002: 110). This number would suggest that the majority of the people still continued to speak English, however, it should be taken into consideration that the prestige and influence of the upper class was out of proportion to the

English population spoke English and that it was reasonable to expect bilingualism among people, who were in contact both with the French upper class and English lower class. (Baugh, 2002: 98-112)

actual number of speakers of this group (Baugh, 2002: 103). This influence had manifested itself, for example, in the literary production of the early Middle English period. Written English was almost exclusively reduced to religious and admonitory texts, and the rest of the literary production, for example popular genres such as romance, was produced in French⁴ (Baugh, 2002: 143).

It can therefore be concluded with some certainty, that based on this evidence the Conquest had a significant effect on the development of the English language; perhaps even as Baugh (2002: 98) claims it might have “had a greater effect on the English language than any other in the course of its history.”

2.1.2 External History: Caxton and the Arrival of the Renaissance

Traditionally, the end of the Middle English period is dated to 1485 with the accession of Henry VII, the first Tudor monarch (Blake, 1992:1). This is certainly only a symbolic end, because this specific year is representative of just one of many historical events that together ushered England into the Early Modern period. The beginning of a new era reflected not only historical changes, but also changes in the society itself and its thinking and approach to the world, which was brought about by several factors. Furthermore, if the causing factors were taken individually, they might not appear to be so important, but their collective influence was unparalleled. Some of these factors were new and others were already introduced earlier, but fully developed only after the year 1500.

Some of “the new factors were the printing press, the rapid spread of popular education, the increased communication and means of communication, the growth of specialized knowledge, and the emergence of various forms of self-consciousness about language” (Baugh, 2002: 187).

Another additional aspect that has already been gradually emerging towards the end of the fifteenth century was the development of a new powerful class, the middle class. With it had also risen the importance of the language the middle class spoke, which was English. This development was partially helped by a rather unlikely ally, The Black Death of 1349 and its

⁴ There are few notable exceptions such as Layamon’s Brut or The Owl and the Nightingale, both tentatively dated at the end of the 12th century.

severe recurring outbreaks. The general death rate of the whole population was 30%⁵, but the mortality was greatest among the lower classes of the population. This has immediately started to affect the labor conditions. The remaining workers, whose ranks were so heavily decimated, demanded better work conditions, which ultimately resulted in the Peasant Revolt of 1381 (Baugh, 2002: 130). It also caused a greater mobility of people, who populated towns⁶ and employed themselves in the traditional city occupations - as craftsmen and merchants - thus increasing their number and status.⁷ The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries therefore saw the growth of medieval English towns, partly aided by the growth of cross-Channel trade (Blake, 1992: 18). This migration and growth of urban territories had an influence on the language as well. The incoming people influenced the language of the cities, which started to change as they incorporated various aspects of different dialects. Moreover, the new merchant class grew in wealth and was able to “take an interest in culture and promote translations and other literary activities” (Blake, 1992: 19).

Another consequence of the new redistribution and stratification of society was also the adoption of new ways of thinking about the world and one’s place in it. Humanism turned its attention away from the symbolical heavens and found a renewed interest in the world and its inhabitants, especially the man. This new approach to life signaled the arrival of the Renaissance and the return to the golden age of Antiquity and its philosophy. Moreover, it also led to discoveries of new territories, such as discovery of America, and voyages of expansion that tested the limits of the Old World.

Nevertheless, what perhaps most affected the development of the English language at that time was the invention of the printing press. This new technology, introduced to England by William Caxton in the 1470s, allowed books to be manufactured in much shorter time and in greater numbers. The dissemination of printing was allowed and furthered by great demand on the side of the middle class, who was by this time sufficiently literate and wealthy to enjoy and order the now available popular genres. They had no classical education, however, which

⁵ According to Scott and Duncan (2001: 101-3) it is impossible to determine accurately the mortality rate, but as was suggested by Clapham (1949) and others “the mortality in the more populous parts of England during the Great Pestilence may well have been at least 30%.”

⁶ Baugh (2002: 131) comments that “[b]y 1250 there had grown up in England about two hundred towns with populations from 1,000 to 5,000; some, like London and York, were larger.”

⁷ Some authors, such as Ziegler (1969, quoted in Scott and Duncan, 2001: 96-97) question the depth of the impact the Black Death had on the English society however. He cites the evidence of a quick recovery and return to the norm and point to the previous declining economy and underemployment as the main reasons for these doubts. For more detailed discussion see Scott and Duncan, chapter 4.7 “The consequences of the Black Death in England” in *Biology of Plagues: Evidence from Historical Populations*.

led to an increase in translation of major works to English. Hence English was promoted once again as the language of the literary culture.

Printing had another additional effect, notably “it was instrumental in the redevelopment of a national literary standard” (Benskin et al., 2013). In addition to that, printers also had a great impact on the regularization and standardization of the Middle English spelling, because they fixated various conventions and introduced a lag between changes in speech and their reflection in written production. Because the first printing press was situated in Westminster, London, the language they promoted was very close to the Chancery Standard, which was the official language of the London administrators and the direct ancestor of modern Standard English (ibid.). Printing therefore soon proved to have a tremendous and lasting impact on the development of Standard English. More on the development of Standard in the subsequent chapters.

2.1.3 Internal History: Structural Changes

As was previously mentioned, momentous changes had taken place in the inner structure of Middle English. Gradual but vast typological re-shapement occurred on all language levels, in phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis. English was thus transformed from a highly inflectional language to a predominantly analytical one. To illustrate the extent and fundamental character of those changes Baugh comments (2002: 146): “At the beginning of the period English is a language that must be learned as a foreign tongue; at the end it is Modern English.” To cover comprehensively all changes that had occurred would be well beyond the extent of this work. Therefore, only few will be discussed to illustrate the extent of the transformation.

Perhaps the most perceptible change in the grammar is the general reduction of inflectional endings. Phonological erosion of nominal and adjectival endings made them largely ineffective in distinguishing case, gender and number. For example:

“[T]he vowels *a*, *o*, *u*, *e* in inflectional endings were obscured to a sound, the so-called ‘indeterminate vowel,’ which came to be written *e* [...]. As a result, a number of originally distinct endings such as *-a*, *-u*, *-e*, *-an*, *-um* were reduced generally to a uniform *-e*, and such grammatical distinctions as they formerly expressed were no longer conveyed” (Baugh, 2002: 147).

The same can be said about the verb, with the additional inclusion of the workings of analogy that regularized many weak verbs. Another important consequence of the loss of endings was the elimination of grammatical gender⁸ (Baugh, 2002: 154).

The loss of the grammatical distinctions previously carried by the inflectional endings had to be resolved by other linguistic means. The solution that was eventually employed was fixation of syntax, which limited the possible patterns of word order. This process was by no means exclusive to the Middle English period, contrary to that it was then barely started and Middle English should be viewed rather as a transitional period. This transitory nature of Middle English can be exemplified by the fact that we can trace Old English syntactical patterns throughout Middle English as well (Baugh, 2002: 149).

Significant changes also happened on the level of the Middle English vocabulary. David Burnley attests to that in his statement: “[the] co-existence of English first with the Germanic languages of Scandinavian settlers, and subsequently with French, with Latin as an ever-present background, has largely formed the English lexis which survives to this day” (1992: 414). As was previously mentioned, English coexisted at that time with two other languages, one spoken and one mostly scholarly. The contact between the two spoken languages, English and French, during this period was very intensive and left traces in both languages that are readily apparent in the lexis to this day. Considering the amount of exchanged vocabulary, however, the number of transferred words from French to English was considerably higher. “The number of French words that poured into English was unbelievably great. There is nothing comparable to it in the previous or subsequent history of the language” (Baugh, 2002: 156).

The relationship between Latin and English was of a different nature. Latin was spoken only in selected religious and educational environments and even there its use was highly ritualized and restricted. However, there were incidents of Latin borrowings as well. They were usually transmitted through textual means such as translations. The most prolific transfers in this period occurred in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. According to Baugh the “The introduction of unusual words from Latin” was viewed as “a conscious stylistic device in the fifteenth century, extensively used by poets and occasionally by writers of prose” (Baugh, 2002: 172).

⁸ “Our present method of determining gender was no sudden invention of Middle English times. The recognition of sex that lies at the root of natural gender is shown in Old English by the noticeable tendency to use the personal pronouns in accordance with natural gender, even when such use involves a clear conflict with the grammatical gender of the antecedent (Baugh, 2002: 154)”

Another interesting and oft omitted source of influence is Scandinavian. Middle English was enriched by many Scandinavian words that today form the core of Modern English vocabulary, such as: *anger, cake, happy, law, leg, raise, silver, sky, Thursday, want or window*. Even though the most intensive contact happened during the Old English period, the Scandinavian loans start to make an appearance only a century and a half after the Norman Conquest (Burnley, 1992: 418). The possible explanation for this surprising phenomenon might be that Scandinavian was not a literary language and the transfer of words occurred mainly in the day-to-day communication. The lack of their appearance in the written Old English sources might then be attributed to the fact that Old English period had a written standard and that Scandinavian words were perceived as non-literary.⁹ Scandinavian terms then started to emerge in the texts only after the Conquest removed the Anglo-Saxon written standard and “scribes began once more to write on a broader range of topics in the forms of their own local dialects” (Burnley, 1992: 419).

2.2 Language Situation

2.2.1 English Variation

One of the most striking characteristics of English of the Middle English period is its great variety, which is not only geographical but also chronological. For instance James Milroy claims that “[Middle English] exhibits by far the greatest diversity in written language of any period before or since” (1992: 156). Texts differ from area to area, and later texts differ from earlier ones (ibid.). The individual speakers also seem to have been aware of these dialectal differences, which can be understood from the comments on the nature of dialects by a number of writers such as Giraldus Cambrensis or William of Malmesbury (Baugh, 2002: 175).

Another unique characteristic of this period is that even though “dialects have been spoken at all periods, it is only during the late medieval times that local usage is regularly reflected in writing” (Benskin et al., 2013). Therefore, without any written standard that would have otherwise obliterated these differences in writing, we are provided with a unique insight into the language situation at that time. Although, “[i]n the sense that it does not reflect a national standard,” it can be assumed that “almost any Middle English written before

⁹ Another issue that complicates identification of Scandinavian loans is that Old Norse and Old English had a very similar structure. It is therefore more difficult to tell them apart.

ca. 1430 is ‘dialectal’ as a matter of definition”(Benskin et al., 2013), for easier orientation five main varieties or regional types are traditionally distinguished: the Northern, the West Midland, the East Midland, the South-Eastern (or Kentish) and the South-Western (or Southern). The general distribution of these main dialects across England is shown on the map below.

Figure 1: Middle English Dialects¹⁰



¹⁰ Adapted from Encyclopaedia Britannica

As can be seen above, there is a strong tendency in dialectology to discover how individual variations are distributed geographically across a map (Milroy, 1992: 160). Even the labels of the individual varieties follow the regions they are most strongly associated with. It should however be emphasized that “dialect divisions are for the most part illusory” and their distribution often overlaps (Benskin et al., 2013). That said there are groups of features that are strongly associated with specific dialects and, based on those features, it is possible to at least roughly identify the provenance of Middle English texts. To illustrate this, a few examples of such features are discussed further.

For instance, the northern dialect is characterized by its marked influence of Old Norse, which is clearly visible in the loan words, such as pronouns *their*, *them*, or *they*. Another distinctive feature is the use of plural present indicative verbal ending *-s*,¹¹ whereas the southern dialects still preserved the Old English form *-eth* and the speakers of the Midlands area employed *-en* ending. Dialects spoken in the south of England were influenced by their close proximity to France and the fact that the Anglo-Norman dynasty resided in London, which is located in the South Eastern England. The contact between French and English was therefore more prominent in this region. Possibly as a result of this contact, some Southern dialects voiced all fricatives in initial positions (Millward, 2012:150).

According to Baugh, dialectal differences were more prominent between the opposite sides of England, the north and the south. The area of Midlands, as the name itself suggests, was located in the middle and therefore “tending toward the one or the other in those districts lying nearer to the adjacent dialects” (Baugh, 2002: 177).

During the fifteenth century the written diversity started to fade as the new written standard became increasingly disseminated. The dialectal situation then started to resemble that of the Modern English. The spoken dialects did not die out and continued to be used, but the written form ceased to be recorded (Benskin et al., 2013).

Yet another aspect that should be considered when discussing the language variation of this period is the so-called scribal variation. There has been a great variability among individual renderings of written works and even within single texts. For example, the same recurrent word could be rendered in multiple ways. This variety of forms was partly due to “a more direct phonographic correspondence between spoken and written language” (Burnley, 1992: 410), and partly a result of the writer’s inconsistency. Frequently different portions of a manuscript appear to be written in different dialects (Milroy, 1992: 157). Every scribe

¹¹ These examples are also significant, because later they made their way into the standard through internal borrowing.

employed different conventions and his work usually also reflected regional peculiarities. Moreover, additional discrepancies might have occurred during the copying of texts, as a result of scribes' own dialectal interference or unfamiliarity with the source language. Such mixed dialects that were results of these interferences are also called *Mischsprachen* (Blake, 1992:13).

2.2.2 Standardization

Toward the end of the fourteenth century a written dialect emerged that in the following century gained the necessary prestige and recognition to become the written standard. The area the new standard emerged from was the East Midlands territory and its dialect, more specifically the area of London, became the basis for it. (Baugh, 2002: 179) There is a strong tendency to think of the development of the standard as uninterrupted and continuous, but it should be emphasized that the written standard of the Old English period was based on a different dialect, that of Wessex. As a result of the Conquest, its dissemination was interrupted in its early phase and another dialect of a different region assumed its role several hundred years later. These two standards, therefore, do not form a linear development.

There were several factors that played an important role in the selection of East Midlands dialect as the new model. Among the most important belong:

- The location. Midlands served as a bridging territory between the North and the South of England. Furthermore, it was the largest and most populous of the major dialect areas (ibid.).
- The presence of the centers of learning, in particular the universities Oxford and Cambridge.
- The presence of London. Probably the most influential factor of all. London as the capital was the seat of the government as well as of the court. It was the center of social and cultural activities, which can be attested by such names as Chaucer or Caxton, who famously resided and created their works in the area. London was also an important port and a commercial hub. People from all over England came to London to find work or to trade and participate in the international business affairs. Consequently, it became a melting pot for various features of Middle English dialects. Last but not least, London was also a home to the Chancery office, which was key in the dissemination of a written standard.

Written London standard was accepted in most parts of the country by the second half of the fifteenth century (Baugh, 2002: 181). This is mostly due to the standardization of the language of the official documents as the local records adopted a wider spreading tendency to conform in matters of language to the Chancery office located in London.

“The Chancery hand developed in Italian chancelleries in the thirteenth century and spread to France in the early fourteenth century. Later in that century it spread to London and the standardization of the handwriting went hand in hand with the standardization of the spelling” (Blake, 1992: 13-14).

In addition to that “it is difficult to detect spellings used by Chancery scribes that can be described as phonetic. In other words a standardized spelling was developing which was divorced from the immediate phonetic environment so that sound and spelling were becoming two separate, if parallel, systems” (Blake, 1992: 13-14).

The introduction of printing in 1476 further strengthened the spreading of the standard by disseminating prints in the London vernacular. “In the sixteenth century the use of London English became a matter of precept as well as practice” (Baugh, 2002: 182).

2.2.3 Bilingualism, Multilingualism

The Middle English period is also interesting in the view of the relationship between three languages that were spoken at that time in England. The local vernacular had to compete and coexist with two other languages, French and Latin. The precise nature of the relationships is hard to describe as the time is long past and the preserved textual evidence providing any information on this topic is scarce. Any assumptions about the extent of the bilingualism that has possibly existed among the English population should be approached with caution. The contemporary analyses thereof are also liable to political interpretation.¹² It

¹² Mary Catherine Davidson discusses quite in depth the various approaches to English in the High Middle Ages by modern linguists. In her book *Medievalism, Multilingualism, and Chaucer*, she criticizes the biased approach to the vernacular, often motivated by nationalism, that tends to de-emphasize the natural bilingualism of that period in favor of English monolingualism. She says: “In that monolingual imagery, histories of English treat the status of the language as an isolated construct, neither unshaken in its self-identity nor derailed from its destiny by contact with Latin, Norse, and, most pointedly from modern perspectives, French. After imagining late medieval English as finally—but inevitably—casting off its French shackles, standard textbooks have been able to conceptualize early modern English as predictably laying the groundwork for its current status around the globe” (2010: 3).

is still possible to sketch at least a rough picture of the language situation at that time and thus attempt to present it closer for further study.

Out of the two languages, the relationship between French and English is more interesting and therefore will be investigated more in depth in the following chapter. Latin was reintroduced mainly as the official language of the Church and learning and remained in use for most of the Middle English period. Due to its passive nature it remained mostly within the structures of the church and did not have deeper influence on English aside from Latinate borrowings.

2.2.3.1 English and French

After the conquest, French variety known as Anglo-Norman was introduced to England and started being used both in speech and writing of literary works and documents. Later, “Anglo-Norman, the aristocratic vernacular used in England, gave way during the early thirteenth century to Anglo-French, which was essentially an administrative language which had to be acquired as a foreign language by the English” (Blake, 1992: 5). English was the spoken vernacular of the majority of the non-aristocratic population and started regaining importance as Anglo-Norman of the aristocracy started to decline. “[English] occurs in written texts sporadically at first, and then increasingly supplants first French and then Latin (Blake, 1992: 5). From this sweeping overview it is possible to discern two periods that mark a shift in the relationship between English and French. The main difference between those two periods lies in the connection and identification of the court and English nobility with their continental holdings.

In the decades following the Conquest, English kings spent substantial part of their reign in France. At times it was even more than half of their rule, for example: Henry I spent in France seventeen out of thirty-five years on the throne, and Henry II resided in France for nearly two-thirds of his reign. The strength of this connection was corroborated by the fact that the Anglo-Norman kings viewed the Duchy of Normandy as their land of origin and therefore as more important than their newly required territory. Furthermore,

“The kings of England were at first vassals of the kings in France and in the end came to claim the throne of France itself. The whole of the Middle English period witnessed a constant struggle between England and France for the control of all parts of France” (Blake, 1992: 16).

The reasons for these advances were new land acquisitions in France, gained mainly through marriage. These close ties and the fact that the aristocracy and the court was Anglo-Norman obviated the need for English. It should be noted, however, that there was no stigma attached to the English language at that time, the aristocracy had simply no use for it (Baugh, 2002:106).

The situation started to change at the beginning of the 13th century, when John the Lackland lost the hereditary Normandy. This act broke the symbolical ties to France and the kings, followed by the aristocracy, had to build their identity anew, this time with England at its heart. Furthermore, a stark rivalry developed between France and England that eventually culminated in the Hundred Years' War and forced the aristocracy to choose and declare their allegiance. This new identification with England slowly brought back English from the realm of common people and reintroduced it as a language of all social classes and culture. This renewal, however, was gradual and lasted almost two centuries.

As English was on the rise, French was more increasingly learned as a secondary language, which can be attested by the appearance of manuals equipped with English glosses (Baugh, 2002: 123). French was perceived less as the mother tongue of the aristocracy and more as the primary language of European culture. There were still French texts being produced, but after 1300 English knowledge was so widespread that numerous authors started writing in English. The symbolic culmination of the reestablishment of English can be attested by the coronation speech of Henry IV in 1399, because it was the first such speech delivered in the vernacular since the Conquest.

Closely tied to the coexistence of these two languages is also the degree of their mutual influence. Both French and English were left with visible traces of this close relationship, though English was transformed to a greater degree. The influence was mainly through the medium of lexical borrowing. It is possible to discern two stages in which the borrowings were introduced, with the year 1250 as the approximate dividing line (Baugh, 2002: 156). Interestingly, despite more intensive contact, the first wave shows less numerous borrowings than the second wave. The reason for this disparity is the shifting nature of the relationship between English and French.

As was mentioned earlier, at the beginning of the 13th century the originally French speaking aristocracy started turning towards English. Aristocracy, in the process of actively learning and using English "carried over into English an astonishing number of common French words" (Baugh, 2002: 156). For example terms for the government, administration, military, church, law, terms for food and fashion, art, learning, and medicine. The peak was

reached at the end of the fourteenth century. Between 1250-1400 came in 40% of all French words that are in the English language. Later, the fifteenth century witnessed a sharp drop.

Lastly, it can be mentioned that the Anglo-Norman or Anglo-French dialect spoken in England differed from the language of Paris (Central French). “Sometimes English has taken over the same word in both its Norman and Central French form” (Baugh, 2002: 162). This dual nature of the French borrowings accounts for the different pronunciation of earlier loans in English from modern French. Another reason is that it was borrowed from Old French before it underwent phonological changes that define Modern French. “It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that as time went on and the use of French in England became more artificial, a larger share of the English borrowing was from Central French” (Baugh, 2002: 164).

3. Research Project

3.1 Objective and Hypothesis

The aim of this work is to analyze contemporary sources and try to draw an image of Middle English as it was viewed and described by the contemporary speakers. Perhaps it might come as surprising that we decided to analyze the contemporary attitudes towards English rather than more linguistic-oriented history of the language itself, but an inquiry into the status of a language and how it developed has its meaning as well. Language and its speakers are intimately connected and influence each other. As Machan explains: “[i]f the beliefs of speakers about a language, and the functions they perform with it, accord that language particular status, that status in turn encourages beliefs, justifies functions, and generally produces social meanings for uses (and users) of the language (2003: 8). Therefore, a study of such attitudes and their development can provide us with more comprehensive understanding about the motivations behind a language development and present a more detailed history of a language.

Furthermore, I chose to focus on this period specifically, because the written sources for the earlier period, that of Old English, are not sufficient to make any wider conclusions. The later period of Early Modern English would have been more suitable for research, as there are plenty of primary sources from that time, but those have already been well documented not only by the modern linguists, but by the contemporary scientists as well. The Early Modern period was the time of the Grammarians and figures such as Lowth or Priestley, who wrote about and commented extensively on the topic of the English language.¹³ Consequently, there is already at our disposal a large body of primary and secondary literature that informs us in a comprehensive manner about the conflicting attitudes towards the language and its grammar at that time.

In the case of the Middle English period, any more extensive and truly comprehensive research on this topic is missing. Most language historians revert to a few examples and derive more general assumptions about the contemporary attitudes towards English from those. Our goal is to attempt to assemble a wider number of references from the Middle

¹³ For further reading about the early Grammarians and the prescriptivism versus descriptivism debate I recommend the BA thesis of David Grosser “Attitudes to language in the prescriptive grammars in the Age of Reason.” His works serves as a very good introduction to the topic. He offers a summary and description of the main tendencies and approaches to codification of the English language at that time.

English literary texts and then to attempt to draw a more detailed and more comprehensive picture of the attitudes of the speakers to their mother tongue in the Middle English period.

3.2. Material and Research Method

Dealing with primary sources in order to conduct the intended research would be largely impossible, due to the fact that the individual manuscripts are scattered all over the world and the time that would be required to go through them would be enormous. Therefore, to accomplish the aim of this study, it was decided to use the available corpora of Middle English texts that were digitalized and accompanied by a special program designed to conduct linguistic research on them. It is possible then to analyze the Middle English texts with the help of pre-selected key words and then further work the results. Ideally, the extraction will provide us with enough suitable results that will enable us to draw some conclusions about the perception of English by the native speakers.

To supplement the corpus results, a number of Middle English quotations will be used from alternative sources: Middle English Dictionary and *The history of the English language* by Albert Baugh and Thomas Cable.

3.2.1 Key Words

As was already mentioned above, the search will be conducted with the help of key words, which need to be defined first. Because the purpose is to identify parts of the texts that are related to the perceptions of the English language and its use, it should follow that the logical choice would be words that are connected to this specific topic. For example words associated with the topic in general, such as *language* and *tongue*, the name of a language itself, such as *English*, or words describing some action that is connected to expressing ideas through language, such as *translate*, *write*, *speak*, *read* etc.

Thusly selected words need to be further modified however, before they can be applied in the search. In order to find a match in the program, the Middle English equivalent of each key word needs to be found. Although it may sound as a rather simple matter of translation, the characteristic Middle English spelling variation complicates the procedure. Combined with the fact that Middle English still retains, albeit in reduced manner, the inflectional endings of the Old English period, it makes for a number of possible variations of

form for one single key word. An example of a list of such variations of one word, *language*, is shown in Table 1.

It would be highly impractical to use each form of the word individually. To at least partially solve this problem, a common root of most of these variations is identified and then applied. However, that causes further problems, because there are many other words with different meanings that have either the form of the root or have a different suffix, but still share the same root, which creates a large surplus of matching results that need to be filtered out, as shown in Table 2.

One possible way how to reduce the time spent going through lists of results that are not necessarily useful is to group the identical forms of the key word together. The precise order of the result, unlike in other types of work with the corpora, is irrelevant. One issue still remains though, the problem with homonymy, that cannot be solved but with careful perusal and understanding of the listed excerpts.

The electronic Middle English Dictionary was used to locate the Middle English cognates of the Present Day English key words. The tool also lists all spelling variants for each word as they appear in Middle English texts. In this the usefulness of the Middle English Dictionary was invaluable, because it enabled us to design the key word in such way as to fit most of the listed variations.

Table 1: MED English Terms and Variations

Word	Spelling Variations
langāŷe (n.)	Also langag, langaige, longage, language, languege, langwache, (errors) lanquage, langedage

Table 2: List of Words Sharing the Same Root¹⁴

Lang*			
ME	PDE	ME	PDE
langāŷe (n.)	a language; tongue; statement; discussion; talk, etc	langōur (n.)	a sickness; misery; an expression of grief
langāŷed (ppl.)	eloquent	langōuren (v.)	to be ill; to suffer
lāngāld (n.)	a hobble	langōuringe (ger.)	suffering; sickness; yearning
lange (n.)	a language	langrāvie (n.)	a landgrave

¹⁴ The abbreviations in the tables of this section stand for: Middle English (ME), Present Day English (PDE)

lange-de-bēf (n.)	a plant of the borage family; a pole; a dish	languerōus (adj.)	Sorrowful
lange-de-cerf (n.)	Hart's tongue fern	languetinge (ger.)	a glib; unreliable talk
lānge-dēnes (n.)	a weapon	languish (n.)	a disease
langel (n.)	a woolen blanket	languishen (v.)	to grow weaker; to lament; to fade
langelen (v.)	to fasten together	languishinge (ger.)	a disease
lange serpent (n.)	a tongue-shaped stone having the property of detecting poison	languishōus (adj.)	Anxious
langet (n.)	an oval-shaped bead used in a rosary; the pointer of a balance; a thong for tying hose	languste (n.)	a locust
langetten (v.)	to chatter	lāng-willed (adj.)	long-suffering; patient
lāng-mōde (adj.)	long-suffering		

3.2.2 Corpus

The corpus analyzed for the purpose of our study is *The Innsbruck Corpus of Middle English Prose*, which is part of the Innsbruck Computer Archive of Machine-Readable English Texts (ICAMET). The project was headed by Manfred Markus from the Universität Innsbruck. "[The Innsbruck corpus] is a compilation of 129 works (in 159 files) of Middle English prose, digitized from extant editions. Its size amounts to some 7.8 mill words" (Markus, 2013). Because of the process of digitalization, we are not working with the primary sources, such as original manuscripts, but with already formatted and edited documents. The corpus is by no means a complete set of texts that were ever produced in the Middle English period and the texts we are working with are rather samples of Middle English prose and other literary works. To cite but a few examples: *A Middle English Herbal* by Agnus Castus, a compendium on herbs, medicine and plants, *The English Works of Wycliff* edited by F. D Matthew, or *Ancrene Riwe* edited by J.R. R. Tolkien. The whole corpus features complete prosaic texts, out of which several are multiple editions of the same work. For example the already mentioned *Ancrene Wisse*, a compendium of rules for anchoresses, was preserved either as a whole or partly in nine Middle English manuscripts (Wada ed., 2003: 103) and each copy exhibits a degree of variation that justified their inclusion into the corpus.

3.2.3 The Program

The program used for the excerption of results is WordSmith Tools, version 5.0.0.238 for Windows. It is a software for finding patterns in text developed by Mike Scott and published by Lexical Analysis Software Ltd. WordSmith allows us to search the corpus for key words and shows us a list of concordances. It has a number of tools that allow us to further adjust the list of the results and thus to make the search easier, such as grouping them together based on the central word's form. Furthermore, it shows us the position of the key word within the text and its immediate context on which basis we are able to determine whether it is a relevant hit or not.

3.3 Problems

There are several complications that hinder the research. Some were already discussed earlier, such as the selection of the key words and long lists of results with only small portion of useful material. Yet another matter is the limited number of texts. The Middle English corpus we are working with is very narrow, especially compared to the number of texts available for later periods. To further complicate the situation, some of these texts are specialized treatises or fictitious narrations, sometimes even translated, that are dealing with subject matters completely unrelated to the English language, for example *English Mediaeval Lapidaries* edited by Evans and Serjeantson, or *The Prose Life of Alexander the Great* edited by J. S. Westlake. It would be unlikely to locate comments on the English language in works of this nature, but at the same time not impossible. The most likely place for such comments would be the authorial commentaries, in which the author or translator decides to address the choice, benefits and limitations of his medium.

4. Analysis

4.1 Presentation of Results

The results of the key word search were numerous. Even though the majority of concordances were not suitable to our purpose, there were some that did indeed reveal a contemporary commentary on the state and nature of the English language. These relevant results were also numerous enough, to enable us to draw conclusions from them, which are described in depth in the following chapter.

The corpus research also revealed that the key words which gave us the most manifold and interesting results were *lang**, *tung** and *englis**. Any additional key words that were tried, such as *tang**, *understood**, *vnderstod**, or *inglis,** pointed largely to the same extracts already located in the previous search. Therefore, this work analyzes the results from three key word searches that were already mentioned as the most productive. The precise numbers of the distribution of results for each key word are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of Relevant, Irrelevant and False Positive Results

Key Word	Relevant		Irrelevant		False Positive		Number of Results	
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%
Lang*	14	1.3	421	39.3	637	59.4	1,072	100
Tung*	23	5.6	179	43.5	209	50.9	411	100
englis*	23	3.7	291	46.9	307	49.4	621	100
all key words	60	2.9	891	42.3	1,153	54.8	2,104	100

It should be also pointed out that many of the results for the individual key words very often co-occurred in one specific sentence or paragraph of one work. We decided the best approach is to analyze larger textual units (where possible), such as whole paragraphs, that often included a number of individual concordances found in the different searches. As a result, the number of relevant results in the table (60) is higher than the actual number of analyzed relevant results (13). For example, the first analyzed extract (ex.4) was a positive result for the key words *lang** (*langages*) and *englis** (*englissh*). The word *englissh* occurs in this extract three times and was therefore identified as three different concordances by the search.

(4) *And afterward whan I remembryd myself of my symplenes and vnperfightnes that I had in bothe **langages** / that is to wete in frenshe & in **englissh** for in france was I neuer / and was born & lerned myn **englissh** in kente in the weeld where I doubte not is spoken as brode and rude **englissh** as is in ony place of englond & haue contynued by the space of .xxx. yere for the most parte in the contres of Braband.*¹⁵

Larger segments were also preferable, because they included the context in which the observations about language were made and thus had a higher information value unlike, for example, sentence fragments. Relevant results that were not analyzed are included in the appendix.

The present analysis also includes examples from other sources, which serve to further illustrate the conclusions drawn from the corpus research. They also provide a wider variety of genres and exemplify that the remarks about the English language were not only restricted to the Middle English prose. Their numbers are listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Examples from Additional Sources

	Number
MED	3
Baugh & Cable	5

4.1.1 Description of Irrelevant Results

The results that were mostly irrelevant to the present research topic were of varying nature. Some were closer and actually commenting on the nature of language in general, such as in this example:

(1) *Euery holy writyng owip to be radde with þe same spirit wherewip it was made. We owin in scriptures raper to seke profitabilnes þan highnes of **langage**. We owe as gladly to rede simple and deuoute bokes as hye bokes & profounde sentences.*¹⁶

¹⁵ ICMEP: Concordance (lang*): 254; word: 441; text: Caxtpro1.txt

¹⁶ This Example comes from the Innsbruck Corpus of Middle English Prose (ICMEP): concordance (lang*): 149 word: 2,194 text: Imita.txt

Other results were mentioning other specific languages such as Arabic or Greek. For example:

(2) *I retornyd home with gret ioye, and yeldid many gracis and worshipis to my makere. And sithen at the request of the noble kyng Alexandre, in gret studie and moche laboure, y translaid this book, out of Greke into the **langage** of Caldee, and aftir into the tonge of Arabike, the which book made the right wijs Aristotille, that answerid euyr to alle the questiones of kyng Alexandre, as ye shalle se more pleyulier sewyng bi ordre.*¹⁷

There were also results that seemingly reveal a contemporary attitude towards the native language, but were deceptive in that they commented on an earlier stage of the language development. For example this excerpt from *The Brut, A chronicle of England* clearly illustrates this point:

(3) *And when ny3t come, þat þe kyng schulde go into his chambre forto take þere his ny3tes reste, Ronewenne, þat was Engistes dou3ter, come wiþ a coupe of golde in here honde, and knelede bifore þe kyng, and saide to him "Whatsaile!" and þe kyng wist nou3t what it was forto mene, ne what he schulde ansuere, for-asmiche as himself ne none of his Britons 3itte coupe none Englisshe speke, ne vnderstonde it, but speken þo þat same **langage** þat Britons 3itte done. Nobeles, a Latymer tolde þe kyng þe fulle vnder_stondyng þerof 'whatsaill'; and þat oper schulde ansuere 'drynkehaile': and þat was þe ferst tyme þat 'whatsaile' and 'drynkehaile' come vp into þis lande; and fram þat tyme into this tyme it Hap bene wel vsede.*¹⁸

The narrator uses the terms *Englisshe* and *Britons* that at first glance would lend themselves to suggestion he means the English language, which was the spoken vernacular in England at the time this book was written. Nevertheless, Britons were the Brythonic-Celtic speaking population that settled England before the Anglo-Saxons, who spoke the West Germanic dialect modern English developed from. Therefore, when the narrator speaks of the English tongue, he means the language of the invaders that was spoken in the early stages of the development of English, in the Old English period, not Middle English.

¹⁷ ICMEP: concordance (lang*): 148 word: 1,697 text: Secrete.txt

¹⁸ ICMEP: concordance (lang*): 218 word: 19,416 text: Brut1.txt

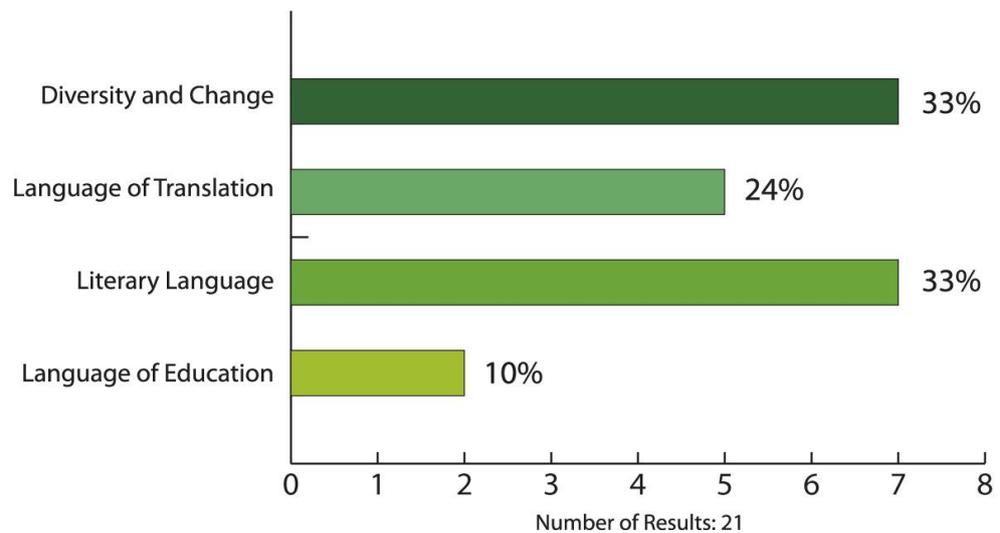
4.1.2 Relevant Results

Although the results that in some way provided additional information about English and its state were of varied nature, it was possible to discern among them five main thematic units:

1. English and Translation
2. English as a Literary Language
3. Diversity and Change
4. English as a Language of Education.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of results per thematic unit.

Figure 2: Distribution of Results per Thematic Unit



Before we proceed further with more detailed analysis of these individual topics, it would first be beneficial to investigate the relevant results as a group. There are several aspects that are shared by all these commentaries, which also reveal or rather confirm some assumptions about the state of the English language.

First noticeable shared feature is the date of the texts. Middle English period spans over four hundred years, but the earliest analyzed textual excerpt that was taken from a text called *Ancrene Wisse*, which is roughly considered as having been written between 1225 and 1240. The other excerpts are dated even later. *Cursor Mundi*, *North English Homily Cycle* and

The Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester are from around the year 1300, and the rest of the texts date back to the fourteenth and fifteenth century. This distribution corresponds to the situation detailed in the first half of this work, where was stated that the first half of the Middle English period was characterized by literary production that was overwhelmingly in French and Latin. It was only at the beginning of the fourteenth century that the situation had changed and English returned from the fringes to the center of (literary) attention.¹⁹

Another feature that to a certain degree corresponds with the previous one is the location of the commentaries in the texts. Most works at that time were furnished either with a prologue or a commentary by the author or translator, who was in some cases also the printer as for example Caxton, and it was in these prefaces that English was most commonly commented on. Baugh explains this phenomenon thusly:

“So much of the polite literature until a generation or two before had been in French that writers seemed to feel called upon to justify their use of English. Accordingly they frequently begin with a prologue explaining their intention in the work that follows and incidentally make interesting observations on the linguistic situation” (2002: 131).

4.2 Interpretation

4.2.1 English Diversity and Change

A very good example of such prologues rich in information about the state of English at that time are those that were preserved in the writings of William Caxton. For example, Caxton wrote in his prologue to *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*:

(4) *And afterward whan I remembryd myself of my symplenes and vnperfightnes that I had in bothe **langages** / that is to wete in frenshe & in englissh for in france was I neuer / and was born & lerned myn englissh in kente in the weeld where I doubte not is spoken as brode and rude englissh as is in ony place of englond & haue contynued by the space of .xxx. yere for the most parte in the contres of Braband.*²⁰

¹⁹ Yet another factor that influenced this result was the selection of texts in the corpus. Therefore the correspondence to the textual production of that time was expected.

²⁰ ICMEP: Concordance (lang*): 254; word: 441; text: Caxtpro1.txt

He mentions that his command of English was not perfect and that he learned a rude form of it. Furthermore, he mentions more variants of the English language and the fact that they were all equal, or rather equally “rude”²¹ in his eyes. Therefore the assumption of the dialectal variation is here confirmed as well as their equal standing. Similar sentiments, especially concerning the variation and language change, are expressed later in other writings as well:

(5) *And also my lorde abbot of westmynster ded do shewe to me late, certayn euydences wryton in olde englysshe, for to reduce it in-to our englysshe now vsid / And certaynly it was wreton in suche wyse that it was more lyke to dutche than englysshe; I coude not reduce ne brynge it to be vnderstonden / And certaynly our **langage** now vsed varyeth ferre from that whiche was vsed and spoken whan I was borne / For we englysshe men / ben borne vnder the domynacyon of the mone, whiche is neuer stedfaste / but euer wauerynge / wexynge one season / and waneth & dyscreaseth another season / And that comyn englysshe that is spoken in one shyre varyeth from a nother.*²²

Closely follows another interesting part in which he artfully captures the troubles of an English speaker trying to communicate with a fellow countryman from another part of the country:

(6) *And one of theym named Sheffelde, a mercer, cam in to an hows and axed for mete and specyally he axyd after eggys, and the goode wyf answerde that she could speke no Frenshe. And the marchaunt was angry, for he also coude speke no Frenshe, but wolde have hadde egges; and she understode hym not. And thenne at laste a-nother sayd that he wolde have eyren. Then the good wyf sayd that she understod hym wel. Loo, what sholde a man in thyse dayes now wryte, egges, or eyren? Certaynly it is hard to playse every man, by-cause of dyversite and chaunge of **langage**.*²³

At the end of this last extract Caxton also briefly touches upon the topic of English changing in time. He was not the only one to notice the remarkable difference between OE and ME, and even more striking difference between early Middle English and late Middle English. The anonymous author of *Ancrene Wisse* also points out to the reader the changes in

²¹ uncultured

²² ICMEP: concordance (lang*): 263 word: 28,744 text: Caxtpro1.txt

²³ ICMEP: concordance (lang*): 171 word: 573 text: Caxteney.txt

“words, sentences and phrases” and even lists a few examples. This comment also reveals the Latinate nature of the new words, which are called *Inkhorne* terms.

(7) *A Rule for Nunnes or Recluses written in Saxon Charect. a good time since the Conqueste. In this may be notid howe the **English** tonge is altered in time both in wordes Sentences and Phrases. Here may yowe note manie wordes mere English nowe be forgotten and Inkehorne termes in their places / As In witt. for Conscience. / mans foundels. for mans Invencions / fore dele. for the forth parte / h[eue]d sinne for Capitall sinne / bone. for desier. / shir heorte. for puer hearte / Domelick. for Iudiciall / Licamlick for corporall / Dedelick for mortall / Ealderlick for principall / flugol for fugitiue.²⁴*

Chaucer makes an observation on the same topic in his tragic poem *Troilus and Cryseide*:

(8) *And for ther is so gret diversite
In Englishsh, and in writing of oure tonge,
So prey I god that non myswrite the,
Ne the mys-metre for defaute of tonge.²⁵*

A commentary from a different source, *Higden's Polychronicon* by John Trevisa, likens the English dialectal diversity to the diversity of French dialects:

(9) *(a1387) Trev. Higd.(StJ-C H.1) 2.161: Bere is as many dyuers manere Frensche in þe reem of Fraunce as is dyuers manere Engliche in þe reem of Engelond.²⁶*

Another extract that confirms the variety of the English language is from the text *Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum: Governance of Princes* by James Yonge. This time though the writer speaks about verbal variety instead of dialectal variety. Although Yonge translates the Latin terms for the cardinal virtues into English, he still defends the use of the original Latin words throughout the text. According to him there exists too many English terms for each virtue with slightly different connotations and it might lead to

²⁴ ICMEP: concordance (englis*): 215 word: 171 text: Ancor.txt

²⁵ Baugh, 2002: 176.

²⁶ This example was taken from Middle English Dictionary (MED)

confusion and imprecision. On one hand, we can see that English at that time had a rich vocabulary and the ability to express the ideas using native resources. On the other hand, we can also see the reluctance of abandoning the superior Latinate forms and their “steadfast” meanings, which writers often thought impossible to translate accurately.

(10) *cArdynal vertues byth callid Pryncipale vertues: the fryst is callid in latyne Prudencia; the Secunde, Iusticia; the thyrde, Fortitudo; the fourthe is Temporancia. Thes byth callid in Frence, Visonge, or Purveyaunce, Dreiture, Coerance, and Temporaunce. Thes byth callid in Englyshe, Wysdome, Ryghtfulnes, StreynThes byth callid in Englyshe, Wysdome, Ryghtfulnes, Streynthe, and tempure. And for-alsmoche as lateyn is the moste stydfaste **langage**, Als ofte as in this presente wrytyng of translacion shall speche of the names of this foure vertues, I putte lateyn in the stydde of Englyshe: For a man may sette dyuers Englyshe for euery of ham.*²⁷

4.2.2 English as the Preferred Language of Translation

Another significant theme that is shared by several results is the preference of English as the target language of translation. Translation of Latin and French texts was very common in the Middle English period, especially in its second half, when the nobility was returning to the use of English as their primary language. The principal audience these translations were aimed at was, however, the middle class, who had the money and desire to read famous classical texts, but could not read French or Latin, as witnessed by this piece of contemporary poetry: *Lewede men cune Ffrench non, Among an hondryd vnneDis on*²⁸ (Baugh, 2002:114). It would be a mistake to consider that no part of middle class could speak French though. It is reasonable to assume that a portion of population was bilingual, but it was English that was more widely known and used among people. Consequently, thanks to the new market that created a high demand for such works, English translations were becoming more and more popular.

There are two general approaches to translation into English that became evident from the nature of the contemporary commentaries: One heralds English as a langue that is equal to other languages of Europe, such as French, and claims that there is no reason why it should not be used in literary production as well. The other sees the use of English rather as a virtue

²⁷ ICMEP: concordance (lang*): 344 word: 10,071 Text: Prynces.txt

²⁸ The Romance of Richard the Lion-hearter, ed Brunner, lines 23-34.

of necessity. If the works are to be understood by the lay people, they simply have to be written in a language the lay people are able to understand. Moreover, this view suggests a continuous preference of French and Latin to English.

One of the contemporary writers, who were staunch defenders of writing in English, is John Wycliffe. He argues passionately for translations of religious texts into the local vernacular. He maintains that the English translations are more preferable, because Latin or French are not understood by everyone whereas English is. Furthermore, he does not see any reason why the most important religious texts should not be accessible to all English people. He claims that if the French people have access to the Bible in French, why should not the English have it as well? To add to the persuasiveness of his opinions, he emphasizes that even the Apostles were spreading the word of God in the native languages. It is therefore quite reasonable to assume that according to Wycliffe, the state of English as a literary language at that time was on par with other literary languages of Europe.

(11) *for þis cause seynt ierom trauelide & translatide þe bible fro dyuerse tungis into lateyn þat it my3te be aftir translated to opere tungis. & þus crist & his apostlis tau3ten þe puple in þat tunge þat was moost knowun to þe puple; why shulden not men do nou so? & herfore autours of þe newe law, þat weren apostlis of iesu crist, writen þer gospels in dyuerse tungis þat weren more knowun to þe puple. Also þe worþy reume of fraunse, not-wiþ-standinge alle lettingis, haþ translatid þe bible & þe gospels wiþ opere trewe sentensis of doctours out of lateyn in-to freynsch, why shulden not engli3sche men do so? as lordis of englongd han þe bible in freynsch, so it were not a3enus resoun þat þey hadden þe same sentense in engli3sch; for þus goddis lawe wolde be betere knowun & more trowid for onehed of wit, & more acord be bi-twixe reumes. & herfore freris han tau3t in englond þe paternoster in engli3sch tunge, as men seyen in þe pley of 3ork, & in many opere cuntreys. siþen þe pater_noster is part of matheus gospel, as clerkis knowen, why may not al be turnyd to engli3sch trewely, as is þis part? specialy siþen alle cristenmen, lerid & lewid, þat shulen be sauýd, moten algatis sue crist & knowe his lore & his lif. but þe comyns of engli3schmen knowen it best in þer modir tunge, & þus it were al oon to lette & siche knowing of þe gospel & to lette engli3sch men to sue crist & come to heuene. Wel y woot defaute may be in vntrewe translating, as my3ten haue be*

*many defaultis in turnyng fro ebreu in-to greu, & fro greu in-to lateyn, & from o langage in-to anoþer.*²⁹

A similar view to that of John Wycliffe can be found in other works as well. One of them is an *English Psalter and Commentary* written by Richerd Rolle. English is to him a familiar sight and likens it to Latin:

(12) *a1500 Rolle Psalter (Wor F.172) 15: I see ther no straunge Inglissh, but that that is esiest and most comune, and suche as is most like to the latyn.*³⁰

Another, longer and poetic defense of the use of English can be found in *Cursor Mundi*, which is “an encyclopedic poem on biblical subjects, written shortly before or shortly after the year 1300.” In the text “we may detect a mild but nonetheless clear protest against the use of French and a patriotic espousal of English” (Baugh, 2002: 126).

(13) *Pis ilk bok es translate
Into Inglis tong to rede
For the love of Inglis lede,
Inglis lede of Inland,
For the comun at understand.
Frankis rimes here I redd
Comunlik in ilka sted;
Mast es it wrought for Frankis man,
Quat is for him na Frankis can?
In Inland the nacion,
Es Inglis man Þar in comun;
Pe speche Þat man wit mast may sped;
Mast Þarwit to speke war need.
Selden was for ani chance
Praised Inglis tong in France;
Give we ilkan Þare langage,
To laud and Inglis man I spell*

²⁹ ICMEP: concordance (lang*): 336 word: 62,545 text: Wyclif2.txt

³⁰ MED

*þat understands þat I tell...*³¹

As was previously mentioned, some translators adopted a different position when considering the English language as the desired target language of translation. For example, John Capgrave, *the author of the Lives of St. Augustine and St. Gilbert of Sempringham, And a Sermon*, does not view English as an equal language to Latin, but rather as inferior. He clearly explains that his work is intended as a literary companion to women, who at that time did not have access to classical education, and therefore could not read the religious literature that was mostly in Latin. It is clear from the context that any other person, mainly educated men, should turn to the preferable original Latin work. English is then viewed as less desirable language for the purpose of learning and religious study, mainly intended for those, who were unable to study the original source materials.

(14) *of our fader Seynt Augustyn, wech þat I translat in-to our tunge at instauns of a certeyn woman, was browt to þour presens, wech lykyd þow wel, as it is told, saue þe wold I schul adde þerto alle þoo relygyous þat lyue vndyr his reule. But to þis I answer þat it was not my charge, but if men like for to knowe þis mater diffusely þei may lerne it in a sermon þat I seid at Cambrig þe 3er be-for myn opposicion, wech sermon vnphap I wil sette in **Englisch** in þe last ende of þis werk. Than aftir þe had red þis lyf of Seynt Augustyn þe sayde to on of my frendes þat þe desired gretly þe lyf of Seynt Gilbert schuld be translat in þe same forme. Thus mad he instaunce to me, and I graunted both þour petycion, this for I wold not frustrate him of his mediacion. To þe honour of God and of all seyntis þan, wil we begynne þis tretys, namelych for the solitarye women of þour religion wech vnneth can vndyrstande Latyn, þat þei may at vacaunt tymes red in þis book þe grete vertues of her maystyr. For her may þei loke as in a glasse, who þei schal transfigure her soules lych on-to þat exemplary in wech þei schul loke.*³²

A very similar approach to translation into English was adopted by Nicholas Love, the translator of Latin *Speculum Vite Christi* of *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*. Unlike Capgrave, he does not specify the gender of his target audience, but at the same is very clear in that his intended readership is the lay population that mostly spoke only English at that time.

³¹ Cursurus Mundi, Prologue, II. 232-50, quoted in Baugh, 2002: 126-7.

³² ICMEP: concordance (englis*): 100 word: 24,487 text: Caplives.txt

(15) *And þus shortly we passen ouere here miche processe of þe gospel & many chapitres of þe forseid boke of Bonaventure, for þe litel edificacion of hem as it semþ nedeful to symple soules, to wech þis boke is specialy written in **english**'. as it hap oft be seide here before. And so leuyng þis processe in many places'. we shole onely telle þe notabilitees þere vpon shortly to edificacion.³³*

4.2.3 English as a Literary Language

The dual approach to English as the language of translation can be further expanded to the debate about English as a literary language in general. Even the original production of the second half of the Middle English period sees both views when it comes to writing in the vernacular. For example Thomas Usk in the prologue to his *The Testament of Love* defends the position of English as the chosen literary language. According to him the English language, being the local vernacular and mother tongue of the people, is a more suitable choice if the Englishmen should compose a text. He argues that even though many great works by great authors were written in Latin or French, there are some that are incomprehensible even to the French people themselves. Each language has its own terms that are difficult to comprehend even by its own native speakers, let alone by someone for whom it is a secondary language. For Usk it naturally follows that writing should be done in the language the writer is most expert in, in his mother tongue, which in this case means English.

It is therefore apparent that, as was mentioned before, at least some portion of the English population was not as intimately acquainted with French as to understand all French terms without problems. Another aspect that is revealed by this comment is that the writer does not view English as a lesser language. French and Latin are not more perfect languages, better fitted to the task, and the use of English a mere necessity stemming from the lack of classical education among the English population. He clearly states “to each his own” and views it as perfectly desirable.

(16) *In Latin and French hath many soverayne wittes had greet delyt to endyte, and have many noble thinges fulfilled; but certes, there ben some that speken their poysye-mater in Frenche, of whiche speche the Frenche men have as good a fantasye as we have in*

³³ ICMEP: concordance (englis*): 304 word: 37,962 text: Mirbles.txt

*hering of Frenche mennes English. And many termes there ben in English, [of] whiche unneth we Englishmen connen declare the knowleginge. How shulde than a Frenche man born suche termes conne jumpere in his mater, but as the jay chatereth English? Right so, trewly, the understanding of Englishmen wol not strecche to the privy termes in Frenche, what-so-ever we bosten of straunge **langage**. Let than clerkes endyten in Latin, for they have the propertee of science, and the knowinge in that facultee; and let Frenchmen in their Frenche also endyten their queynt termes, for it is kyndely to their mouthes; and let us shewe our fantasies in suche wordes as we lerneden of our dames tonge.*³⁴

The *North English Homily Cycle* also reveals a subtle patriotic tone in preference of English in its poetic text. The anonymous author states that he would rather that all people born in England understand his text than just a part.

(17) *Forthi wil I of my povert*

*Schau sum thing that Ik haf in hert,
On Ingelis tong that alle mav
Understand quat I wil say;
For laued men havis mar mister
Godes word for to her
Than klerkes that mirour lokes,
And sees hou thai sal lif on bokes.
And bathe klerk and laued man
Englis understand kan,
That was born in Ingeland,
And lang haves ben thar in wonand,
Bot al men can noht, I-wis,
Understand Latin and Frankis.
Forthi me think almous it isse
To wirke sum god thing on Inglisse,
That mai ken lered and laued bathe.*³⁵

³⁴ ICMEP: concordance (lang*): 339 word: 472 text: Testlove.txt

³⁵ North English Homily Cycle, ed. John Small, *English Metrical Homilies from Manuscripts of the Fourteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1862), pp. 3-4, quoted in Baugh, 2002: 131-2.

A parallel statement can be found in another poetic work from about the same time, around the first half of the fourteenth century:

(18) *In English tonge I schal 3ow telle,
3if 3e with me so longe wil dwelle.
No Latyn wil I speke no waste,
But English, Dat men vse mast,
Dat can eche man vnedorstande,
Dat is born in Ingelande;
For Dat langage is most chewyd,
Os wel among lered os lewyd.
Latyn, as I trowe, can nane
But Do, Dat haueth it in scole tane,
And somme can Frensche and no Latyn,
Dat vsed han cowrt and dwellen Berein,
And somme can of Latyn a party,
Dat can of Frensche but feebly;
And somme vnderstode wel Englysch,
Dat can noPer Latyn nor Frankys.
BoPe lered and lewed, olde and 3onge,
Alee vnderstoden English tonge.³⁶*

Perhaps the most radical defense of the English tongue was delivered through the work of Reginald Pecock. He makes his views perfectly clear, when he states in his *Follower to the Donet* that if this book were not in English, he would not write it at all.

(19) *No more, sone, of þis contrauersie here. Certis, þis mych wolde not y haue write here in lay tunge, ne were þat y hope þis present book schal be translaid into latyn tunge; And parauenture, if y schulde abstene me here now fro writing herof in lay **tunge**, y schulde neuer write it, neiþir in lay tunge neiþir in latyn tunge, and þat for greet prece of many opire maters profryng hem silf daili to be writen and to be delyuerid into knowyng;³⁷*

³⁶ William of Nasszngton's *Speculum Vitae*, *Englische Studien*, 7 (1884), 469, quoted in Baugh, 2002: 133.

³⁷ ICMEP: concordance: 229 (tung*) word: 12,043 text: Pecdon2.txt

Pecock's work is essentially informing the lay population about Christian doctrine and is written in the more accessible form of a dialogue between father and son. At the time Pecock wrote this book, around 1445, it was still too soon for such radical project that emphasized understanding and reasoning and as a result he was condemned for heresy. One of the most admirable aspects of his literary production is the reasoning that writing in the vernacular is essential if the edification of the lay population is to be achieved. His defense is very elaborate and well thought out, as can be witnessed by this paragraph from the same text:

(20) *[P]Arauenture summe men wolen seie þat in þis present book, and in 'þe book of cristen religioun', and in opire bookis whiche y write for lay men, y write maters passing þe capacite and þe power of lay men forto þo maters vndirstonde; wherto y seie þus of certeynte: þat þei passen not ech lay mannys power which hap assaied hem eer þis day to hem learne and vndirstonde, how euer fewe lay men haue redde and studied in hem afore þis present day. And 3it y meene not of suche lay men whiche schulden mowe learne and vndirstonde þo writyngis if þei weren maad in latyn, but of þo lay men whiche kouþe not studie and vndirstonde hem if þei were maad in latyn. And 3it ferþir y seie þus: Be it so þat þo writyngis passen ful many lay mennys power and capacite forto þoru3 ech place of þo writyngis vndirstonde hem, what þerof? Schal it be seid as folewyng þerof þat no lay men þerfore schulden reede and learne in eny opir place of þo writyngis? Goddis forbode þat it schulde so folewe. fforwhi þe bible in latyn in many of his parties passip þe capacite and þe power of ful many grete clerkis and of grete and kunnyng doctouris, Schulen þei þerfore caste aside þe bible, and not rede and studie in eny opir parti þerof? god forbede 3he. and forto seie ferþir: þou3 þo grete clerkis in clerist and li3tist maner vndirstonde not derk processis of þe bible in latyn, 3it þei ben in sum maner sweteli fed and edified bi redyng þerin; [...]þat summe writyngis of doctrine and summe writyngis of officiying bi preisyng and bi preier be maad and be delyuerid to lay men in her owen lay tunge, he schal parauenture se þere ferþir ri3t good cause whi it may be expedient and profitable þat summe of þo bookis whiche ben to be maad in lay **tunge**, and to be delyuerid to lay men, be so hard þat þei be not li3tli and esili vndirstonde of þe wittiest lay men whiche schulden rede and studie and learne þerinne;*³⁸

³⁸ ICMEP: concordance (tung*): 230 word: 2,900 text: Pecdon2.txt

English was also used in other types of writing, which are rather associated with daily life than pleasure or learning, such as writing of letters. These daily writings can sometimes reveal interesting information about the state of the English language as well. An extract from a letter addressed to Henry IV of England by George, Earl of Dunbar, written on February 18th, 1400, might serve as an example:

(21) (1400) *Let.Hen.IV in RS 18.1 (Vsp F.7) 24: And, noble Prince, mervaile yhe nocht that I write my lettres in Englishe, fore that ys mare clere to myne understanding than Latyne or Fraunche.*³⁹

The writer of this letter is clearly expressing that he knows English better than Latin or French, which is an interesting fact, because he is a member of an aristocratic class that was for a long time associated mainly with French. Furthermore, the addressee is none other than the king himself. The author is therefore assuming that the king has to be well versed in the vernacular to read it. This is not an altogether unexpected assumption, because Henry IV is known for being the first king since the Conquest that has made his coronation address in English. It is possible to observe in this short excerpt how the active knowledge of English has slowly spread even to the highest spheres of English society and reached its absolute peak.

The knowledge of French among nobility was on the decline for some time already, as can be attested by this quotation from the Romance called *Arthur and Merlin*, written circa 1325 (74 years before Henry IV's coronation):

(22) *Ri3t is, Dat Inglische Iglische vnderstod,
Dat was born in Inglond;
Freynsche vse Dis gentilman,
Ac euerich Inglische can.
Mani noble ich haue ysei3e
Dat no Freynsche couþe seye.*⁴⁰

³⁹ MED

⁴⁰ *Arthur and Merlin*, ed. E Kölbing (Leipzig, 1890), quoted in Baugh, 2002: 134.

4.2.4 English as a Language of Education

Geoffrey Chaucer in his prologue to *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* considers yet another approach to the English language. This particular work of his was compiled from various sources for his son, Lewis, to teach him about astronomy. He chose English as a more suitable medium for his education, as opposed to Latin, and explained his decision to adjust the language used in the work to suit the needs of his young son. It can be assumed then that English at that time was a complex language, not a mere simplified language used mainly for daily communication, but capable of more elaborate constructions that might be hard to understand by young learners.

(23) *Now wol I prey meekly every discret persone that redeth or hereth this litel tretis, to have my rewde endyting for excused, and my superfluite of wordes, for two causes. The firste cause is, for that curious endyting and hard sentence is ful hevvy atones for swich a child to lerne. And the seconde cause is this, that sothly me semeth betre to wryten un-to a child twyes a good sentence, than he for-gete it ones. And Lowis, yif so be that I shewe thee in my lighte English as trewe conclusiouns touching this matere, and naught only as trewe but as many and as subtil conclusiouns as ben shewed in Latin in any commune tretis of the Astrolabie, con me the more thank; and preye god save the king, that is lord of this **langage**, and alle that him feyth bereth and obeyeth, everech in his degree, the more and the lasse. But considere wel, that I ne usurpe nat to have founde this werk of my labour or of myn engin. I nam but a lewd com_pilatour of the labour of olde Astrologiens, and have hit translated in myn English only for thy doctrine; and with this swerd shal I sleen envye.*⁴¹

Caxton in his prologue to the *Historie of Jason* also expresses a desire to educate a young boy, a very specific child no less, the Prince of Wales. Caxton clearly expresses his wish that his translation would be used as a teaching material for Edward IV's son. Therefore Caxton, similarly to the Earl of Dunbar, expects the future monarch will be in command of the English language. English has been clearly reestablished as the most prestigious vernacular.

⁴¹ ICMEP: concordance (lang*): 243 word: 596 text: Astske.txt

(24) *Thenne for the honour & worship of our sayd moost redoubted liege lorde whiche hath taken the sayde ordre / I haue vnder the shadowe of his noble proteccion enterprised taccomplissh this sayd lital boke. not presumyng to presente it vnto his highnesse. for asmoch as I doubte not his good grace hath it in frensh, which he wel vnderstandeth but not displesing his most noble grace I entende by his licence & congye & by the supportacion of our most redoubted liege lady / most excellent princesse the Quene to presente this sayde boke vnto the most fayr. and my moost redoubted yong lorde. My lord Prynce of Wales our tocomyng souerayne lorde whom I praye god saue and encrease in vertue & bryng him vnto asmoche worship and good Renomme as euer had ony of his noble progenytours To thentent / he may begynne to lerne rede **Englissh**. not for ony beaute or good Endyting of our englissh tonge that is therin. but for the nouelte of the histories whiche as I suppose hath not be had bifore the translacion herof⁴²*

⁴² ICMEP: concordance (englis*): 368 word: 5,553 text: Cxtpro1.txt

5 Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to explore the attitudes toward the native language in the Middle English period. Both native and contemporary aspects of these attitudes were emphasized. Because there are no preserved Middle English works that deal primarily with this specific topic, the subject matter was researched using the methods of corpus linguistics. As a consequence, we have extended the scope of the searched material to include any text written in Middle English, and looked for secondary, or accidental, commentaries about the English language.

The present study, however, should by no means be considered comprehensive. There are two limitations that needed to be considered. First was the amount of texts that was actually digitalized and available for the corpus study. The second consideration was that of the spatial limitation of this work. We therefore decided to use the Innsbruck Corpus of Middle English Prose that consists of 129 digitalized texts. It needs to be emphasized that it is only a segment of the total literary production of the Middle English period, even though this corpus is the largest available. Nevertheless, it was enough to provide us with a representative sample of textual extracts that proved to show certain visible trends and attitudes to the language.

The corpus was searched using pre-selected key words out of which three provided us with the most relevant results: *lang**, *englis**, and *tung**. Most concordances proved to be irrelevant to our study, either because the central word had a different meaning or because it was used in a different context. The remaining relevant results were subsequently described and analyzed for any recurring patterns. It should be mentioned that additional quotations were used to provide a variety of genres and to illustrate the conclusions that were based on the corpus research.

To begin with, the relevant results were reviewed as a group. Aside from the text *Ancrene Wisse*, which is believed to have been written roughly between 1225 and 1240, the majority of extracts date from the 1300's onward. This finding supports the conclusions made earlier about the revival of English as a medium of the written word, which corresponds to the loss of Normandy in 1202-04 by John the Lackland, and the slow, subsequent establishment of English as an aspect forming the English identity throughout the second half of the Middle English period. The return to the use of English was surely supported by many other factors, but this political loss provides us with a date that marks a turn in the perception of English and England by the ruling class.

The other shared factor was the location of the commentaries within the structure of the books they came from. Often they were found in introductory parts, such as prologues, which worked as a form of explanation as to why this text was made, and often also gave reasons (or apologies) for why it was written in English. Some of the quotations also appeared in the main text, usually assuming the form of a writer's side note or commentary.

As a next step the extracts were described and grouped together according to their content. The most abundantly represented topics were: English as a Literary Language and English Diversity and Change. Many excerpts from a diverse collection of texts mentioned that English at that time was an ever-changing language with a large number of spoken and written dialects. The individual variations were not judged to be inferior or superior, as one would expect, but were viewed as equal. The only person to offer an opinion on the quality of the different dialects was Caxton, who commented that all are 'rude,' but also equally so. Another interesting point is that these variations displayed such wide differences that it was difficult for two speakers from different parts of the country to understand each other, as illustrated in another example from Caxton. Several authors also remarked upon the extent of the language change between the Old English and Middle English period and the verbal variation present in the Middle English period.

The analysis of the topic English as a Literary Language and the next one, closely related English as the Language of Translation, revealed two different and in a sense opposing attitudes towards the local vernacular, which can be also interpreted as an ongoing debate and issue. One set of authors/translators were against the texts being produced in English, and only allowed it as a necessary evil in order to reach wider audiences. The others considered it a matter of privilege to write in English and viewed it as very natural that when they are writing for the English people they should use the language the majority of the people actually speak. Furthermore, those two approaches coexisted together for a long period of time. Testaments to the opposing view can be traced as far back as the second half of the fifteenth century (in the available corpus). In the presented extracts we are able to trace the spread of the knowledge and use of the English language through all the spheres of the English society and ultimately reaching its apex, as evidenced by the comments made by Earl of Dunbar in his letter to the king and by Caxton, who expected king's son to be trained in reading not only in Latin, as was the custom, but also in English, because it was his mother tongue.

The last remark brings us to the last topic yet to be mentioned, English as a Language of Education. Caxton thought English was suitable and important enough that the future monarch should be able to read it. He also did not think the book he recommended would be

too difficult as a study material. Chaucer, on the other hand, in his book on astronomy, which was specifically written as a study book for a young boy, explains that he modified the language he used to suit this particular purpose. He thought that English might be too complicated as it is and therefore made some simplifications.

Drawing from the results of the present analysis it can be assumed then, that most of the contemporary authors saw English as a fully developed, complex language that underwent serious changes, but eventually gained an equal status on par with other, fully developed vernaculars of Europe.

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8 Resumé

Předmětem zkoumání této bakalářské práce je nalezení a popis postojů k mateřskému jazyku ve středoanglickém období. I když téma dobového vnímání jazyka nebývá tolik v popředí zájmu lingvistů zabývajících se historií jazyka, jako například syntax, morfologie či fonologie, je přesto velice užitečné ho podrobně zkoumat. Podobně jako gramatická struktura, i vnímání jazyka a jeho statusu prochází určitým vývojem, který nám dokáže leccos prozradit nejen o jeho mluvčích a jejich smýšlení, jež ovlivňuje vývoj jazyka, ale i o zpětném vlivu jazyka na myšlení mluvčích. Nicméně studium postojů mluvčích k jazyku není zdaleka tak jednoduché, obzvlášť pokud se zaměříme na období předcházející vynálezu knihtisku. Tendence mluvčích o jazyku psát a dále ho zkoumat, motivovaná uvědoměním si jazyka jako takového, se totiž objevila až relativně nedávno a vyvinula se až po příchodu tisku.

Pokud chceme tedy poodhalit, jak byl jazyk vnímán jeho mluvčími v dřívějších dobách, před objevením gramatik a jiných přímých zdrojů zabývajících se jazykem, musíme se spolehnout na zachovalé dobové materiály a hledat jednotlivé a spíše náhodné zmínky v nich. Množství zachovalé literatury byl tedy jeden z určujících důvodů, proč jsme pro účel této práce vybrali období střední angličtiny. Na rozdíl od předcházející staré angličtiny, o které z pohledu jejích mluvčích také není mnoho známo, je totiž ze středoanglického období zachováno dostatek literatury, které umožňuje výzkum na toto téma provést. Vzhledem k velmi omezenému množství dochovaných děl by byly jakékoli závěry o staré angličtině založeny spíše na dohaděch než na pramenném základu.

Než přejdeme k prezentaci samotného praktického výzkumu, který tvoří druhou část bakalářské práce, je třeba období střední angličtiny vymezit a podrobněji se s ním seznámit. Informace pro úvodní teoretický přehled pocházejí v první řadě z již publikovaných prací na téma historie anglického jazyka. Jak nás mnohé zdroje informují, střední angličtina se vyznačuje především svou radikálně odlišnou strukturou, která byla ovlivněna mnoha morfologickými a syntaktickými změnami, jimiž jazyk v tomto období prošel. Změny se odehrávaly jak na gramatické, tak na lexikální úrovni, což mělo za následek, že se angličtina pozvolna změnila z jazyka flektivního na jazyk analytický. Pro ilustraci rozsahu a převratnosti jazykových změn je zajímavé zmínit, že na začátku středoanglického období se setkáváme s jazykem, jehož struktura je natolik odlišná od angličtiny moderní, že jej i rodilí mluvčí současné angličtiny musejí studovat podobně jako cizí jazyk; ke konci jejího vývoje nacházíme angličtinu velmi podobnou té současné. Dále došlo například ke zjednodušení systému flektivních koncovek, k jejich fonetické erozi a slučování. Větná stavba se začala

upevňovat a původně volný slovosled byl omezen. Pozoruhodný vývoj se odehrál i na poli slovní zásoby. Střední angličtina si obohatila slovník značným množstvím výpůjček především z francouzštiny a latiny.

Významné změny se ovšem neodehrávaly pouze v samotném jazyce, ale také ve vnějším světě jeho mluvčích. Datace období střední angličtiny je proto tradičně vymezena politickými událostmi, jež významně ovlivnily osud obyvatel Anglie a jejich mateřského jazyka. Jednou z mimořádných historických událostí, stojících na počátku středoanglického období, je dobytí Anglie Vilémem Dobyvatelem v roce 1066. Jeho příchod znamenal konec nadvlády domácí anglické aristokracie a spolu s ní konec kulturní i politické dominance místního jazyka. Stojí za to zmínit, že před obsazením Anglie byla angličtina jediným evropským rodným jazykem požívaným nejen pro účely běžné psané komunikace, ale i pro psaní oficiálních dokumentů a kulturně významných textů, jakým byla například Anglosaská kronika. Nicméně nový vládce hovořil francouzsky, stejně jako jeho dvůr a angličtina ztratila na významu. Odborníci někdy inklinují k interpretaci nastalého vývoje jako pro angličtinu katastrofického, nýbrž je důležité podotknout, že ta zcela nevytizela. Naopak, pro 80% obyvatelstva Anglie byla stále jedinou mateřštinou a jako taková byla používána denně v běžné mluvě. Takto nastíněná situace trvala bez větších změn zhruba dalších sto padesát let.

K postupné změně začalo docházet až na počátku 13. století, kdy Jan Bezzemek v důsledku své neúspěšné vojenské kampaně na evropském kontinentě ztratil značná území ve Francii, mezi jinými i důležité dědičné Normanské vévodství. Anglický král tak mezi lety 1200-1204 ztratil významné území, které spojovalo jeho rod s Francií. Do té doby nová šlechta stále považovala Anglii za dobyté území a svůj pravý domov spatřovala ve Francii, což představovalo také hlavní důvod, proč anglická šlechta nepovažovala za nutné se přizpůsobit a naučit se místní jazyk. Bylo by proto mylné se domnívat, že angličtinu nepoužívala, protože ji považovala za horší či jinak nedůstojný jazyk. Jan Bezzemek však pouta s Francií zpřetrhal a následující angličtí králové si spolu se šlechtou museli vytvořit novou, ryze anglickou identitu. Angličtina se poté začala opět pomalu šířit mezi vyšší vrstvy společnosti a získávat na prestiži.

Konec středoanglického období nerámuje především jedna významná událost, jako to bylo s jeho začátkem, ale spíše několik navzájem se ovlivňujících jevů, které pomalu měnily tvář společnosti 15. století. Prvním z nich byla morová rána, která zasáhla Anglii roku 1347 a jejímž následkem Anglie přišla o 30% celkové populace, především venkovanů. Tato tragická událost uvedla do pohybu změny, které měly paradoxně za následek zlepšení pracovních podmínek. Naprostý nedostatek pracovních sil znamenal, že se zbylí sedláci začali domáhat

lepšího zacházení, což nakonec vyústilo ve venkovské povstání roku 1381. Začala se měnit i ekonomika, neboť v pozdním středověku nastal velký odliv venkovanů do měst a ta se začala rapidně rozrůstat. Spolu s městy se dále rozvíjela i typická městská povolání, jako například kupectví, a peněžní obchod. Rozvoj urbanizace umožnil, že se v doposud tradičně strukturované středověké společnosti objevila nová střední třída.

S nástupem nové společnosti přišla i změna v celkovém smýšlení doby a do Anglie dorazila nová forma filozofie nazývaná humanismus. Společnost odvrátila své zraky od nebe a upřela je zpět na zemi, kde našla nový objekt své pozornosti, člověka. Došlo tak k znovuoživení antické filozofie, k návratu k antickým ideálům a do Anglie vtrhla renesance.

Událostí, která měla však pravděpodobně nejzásadnější dopad na společnost, zcela jistě z hlediska jazykovědného, byl vynález knihtisku a jeho uvedení do Anglie Williamem Caxtonem, k němuž došlo v sedmdesátých letech 15. století. Knihotisk umožnil, aby se knihy, do té doby velmi drahé a náročné na výrobu, staly dosažitelné pro širší vrstvy společnosti. Vzestup nové střední třídy zajistil, že nové tisky měly odbytiště. Poněvadž většině populace chybělo klasické vzdělání, knihy se navíc začaly tisknout v jazyce, kterému rozuměla, tedy v angličtině. Ta se tak postupně začala vracet na scénu nejen jako jazyk komunikace, ale také jako jazyk kultury a vzdělávání.

Vynález knihtisku měl ještě jeden vedlejší efekt, neboť napomohl standardizaci anglického jazyka. Jelikož první tiskárna byla postavena v londýnském Westminsteru, byl to právě londýnský dialekt, který byl použit jako základ jazykového standardu pro nové tisky, jež poté tuto variantu angličtiny dále rozšiřovaly. Knihotisk také napomohl standardizaci pravopisu a díky němu se jinak velmi dynamické změny v mluveném jazyce začaly objevovat s větším zpožděním.

Období střední angličtiny je také zajímavé tím, že angličtina nebyla jediným jazykem, kterým se v té době v Anglii hovořilo, ale se musela dělit o místo s francouzštinou, preferovanou aristokracií, a latinou, jazykem církve. Je těžké posoudit, do jaké míry byla středověká anglická společnost bilingvní, ale jisté je, že alespoň určitá část obyvatelstva oba jazyky ovládala. Šlo zejména o vrstvu obyvatel, kterou například její povolání přivedlo do kontaktu jak se šlechtou, tak i s prostým obyvatelstvem. Že šlo o intenzivní soužití můžeme pozorovat i na stopách, jež tyto dva jazyky na sobě zanechaly zejména ve slovní zásobě. Angličtina byla v tomto ohledu daleko více ovlivněna než francouzština a v průběhu desítek let přejala enormní množství francouzských slov. Je ale zajímavé, že k největšímu přesunu došlo až po roce 1250. Tento fakt úzce souvisí se změnou vztahu mluvčích, především aristokracie, k oběma jazykům. Angličtina se v druhé polovině 13. století začala rozšiřovat

jako rodný jazyk i do vyšších vrstev, které postupně opouštěly francouzštinu. Francouzština počala být vnímána spíše jako jazyk evropské kultury a jako taková musela být učena jako cizí jazyk.

Nyní se zaměříme na druhou, více praktickou část této práce, která se zabývá výzkumem provedeném na základě korpusových excerpcí. Jak již bylo výše zmíněno, ze středoanglického období se nedochovaly žádné primární zdroje zabývající se přímo jazykem té doby. Jako vhodný studijní materiál nám tedy posloužila dochovaná literární díla té doby. Je nutné podotknout, že použitý korpus zdaleka neobsahuje všechna díla v té době napsaná, ale zároveň se jedná o nejobsáhlejší zdigitalizovaný korpus středoanglických děl, který je k dispozici. Zkoumaný *Innsbrucký korpus středoanglické prózy* (*The Innsbruck Corpus of Middle English Prose*) sestává ze 129 jednotlivých děl, která byla analyzována prostřednictvím korpusového manažeru. Jedná se o program umožňující pomocí klíčových slov vyhledání takových částí textu, které určujícím způsobem souvisely s tématem této práce. Výsledky korpusové excerptce byly dále popsány a zařazeny do širších tematických kategorií podle obsahu jejich sdělení. Aby byl obraz soudobého přístupu k jazyku ještě ucelenější, další dobové komentáře byly převzaty ze sekundárních zdrojů, konkrétně ze *Středoanglického slovníku* (*Middle English Dictionary*) a *Historie anglického jazyka* (*History of the English Language*) od autorů Alberta Baugha a Thomase Cablea.

Z celkového počtu 21 úryvků byly nejčetnější dva tematické okruhy: angličtina jako literární jazyk a změny a variace anglického jazyka. Druhé zmíněné téma bylo obsaženo hned v několika textech, ale zajímavější bylo zjištění, že žádná z mnoha variant angličtiny nebyla považována za horší, anebo naopak za lepší. Jediný, kdo okomentoval jejich kvalitu, byl Caxton, který poznamenal, že jeho rodný Kentský dialekt je nekultivovaný, ale zároveň dodal, že stejně hrubé jsou i ostatní dialekty. Autorem další zajímavé zmínky byl opět Caxton, jenž uvedl, že jednotlivé dialekty jsou místo od sebe natolik odlišné, že dva mluvčí různých variant mohou mít potíže si porozumět. Zbýlé úryvky komentovaly také variaci, ale na úrovni jednotlivých slov. Například podle Jamese Yonga existuje v angličtině mnoho různých výrazů pro kardinální ctnosti, ale žádný nedosahuje přesnosti latiny. Poslední úryvek z této sekce se věnuje dramatickým rozdílům mezi starou a střední angličtinou.

Komentáře na téma angličtiny jako literárního jazyka měly podobný charakter jako úryvky spadající do dalšího tematického celku, překládání do angličtiny. Doboví spisovatelé a překladatelé většinou zaujali k anglickému jazyku dva rozdílné postoje. Jedni považovali angličtinu za nutné zlo, které se musí strpět, pokud jejich práce má mít širší publikum. Podle jejich názoru překlady do mateřštiny zdaleka nedosahovaly kvalit původních latinských a

francouzských textů. Druzí naopak tvorbu v angličtině preferovali a vítali. Považovali za naprosto přirozené, aby Angličané žijící v Anglii měli k dispozici texty psané v jejich rodném jazyce, a to zejména tehdy, když značná část obyvatelstva neměla klasické vzdělání a tudíž si latinské a francouzské texty nemohla osvojit. Například Wycliffe obhajoval své překlady nejen argumenty náboženského charakteru, ale také selským rozumem. Podle něj je zcela samozřejmé, že když Francouzi mohou mít k dispozici Písmo ve francouzštině, tak Angličané ho mohou mít v angličtině.

Na vybraných příkladech je také možné dále vysledovat postupný průnik angličtiny do vyšších vrstev v průběhu středoanglického období. Kupříkladu v úryvku z dopisu hraběte z Dunbaru adresovaném králi Jindřichu IV. se dočteme, že pro hraběte je jednodušší dopis napsat v angličtině nežli v jiném jazyce. Navíc zde hraje roli i předpoklad, že král si bude schopen anglický dopis přečíst, což podporuje historická skutečnost. Jindřich IV. byl totiž prvním anglickým králem od dob podmanění Anglie Vilémem Dobyvatelem, který v roce 1399 přednesl svou korunovační řeč v anglickém jazyce. Očekávání, že královská rodina by měla ovládat angličtinu, je obsaženo i v jednom z Caxtonových prologů.

Na konci uvedený příklad nás přivádí k poslednímu tématu, jímž je angličtina jako jazyk výuky. Caxton totiž ve výše zmíněném prologu doporučuje jeden ze svých překladů jako vhodný text pro prince z Walesu, na kterém by se mohl naučit číst. Je zajímavé, že text nijak dále neuzpůsobil, na rozdíl od Chaucera, který též napsal dílo s úmyslem vzdělat svého malého synka. Jeho záměrem bylo naučit chlapce astronomii, ale Chaucer sám uznal, že anglický jazyk ve své obvyklé podobě by byl pro malé dítě příliš komplikovaný, a tak svůj překlad podle toho upravil. To nicméně dokazuje, že angličtina rozhodně nebyla jazykem jednoduchým nebo zjednodušeným, ale měla plně rozvinutou gramatickou strukturu a slovní zásobu.

Z výsledku analýzy je tedy zřejmé, že angličtina byla většinou soudobých autorů a překladatelů vnímána jako komplexní, plnohodnotný jazyk, který je roven ostatním tehdy významným evropským jazykům.

9 Appendix

The appendix table contains those relevant results that were gathered, but not quoted. Most commonly they were part of larger paragraphs that were analyzed in this thesis, but it would have been inconvenient to include them in the quotations, as they would not add any new information. Some of the results also contained identical information that was repeated throughout the source text. In that case we decided to include just one example in the analysis.

The individual columns, taken from the left, show the key word, the concordance number, word-position (e.g. 1st word in the text is 1), relevant result, and source text.

The central word is highlighted in bold letters in the individual excerpts.

Appendix table: Not Quoted Relevant Results

Key Word	Concordance #	Word #	Relevant Result	Source Text
lang*				
	243	596	ewed in Latin in any commune tretis of the Astrolabie, con me the more thank; and 40 preye god save the king, that is lord of this langage , and alle that him feyth bereth and obeyeth, everech in his degree, the more and the lasse. But considere wel, that I ne	Astske.txt
	347	903	holde, defende, or faouere, in þis book, or in enye opire bi me writun, r[f.2a] or to be writun, in latyn or in þe comoun peplis langage , enye erreure or heresie or enye co[n]clusioun whiche schulde be a3ens þe feiþ or þe lawe of oure lord god. r25 and if e	Pecdon1.txt
	353	39,872	, and clepeth hem 'Margery_perles'; thus varieth our speche from many other langages. For trewly Latin, Frenche, and many mo other langages clepeth hem, 40 Margery-perles, [by] the name 'Margarites,' or 'Margarite-perles'; wherfore in that denominacion I wol m	Testlove.txt
	354	39,863	e tonges of us Englissh people tourneth the right names, and clepeth hem 'Margery_perles'; thus varieth our speche from many other langages . For trewly Latin, Frenche, and many mo other langages clepeth hem, 40 Margery-perles, [by] the name 'Margarites,' or 'M	Testlove.txt
	363	408	Arabiens in Arabik; and to Iewes in Ebrew, and to the Latin folk in Latin, whiche Latin	Astske.txt

			folk han hem 25 furst out of othre diverse langages , and writen in hir owne tonge, that is to sein, in Latin. And god wot, that in alle these langages, and in many mo, han	
	366	428	m 25 furst out of othre diverse langages, and writen in hir owne tonge, that is to sein, in Latin. And god wot, that in alle these langages , and in many mo, han these conclusiouns ben suffisantly lerned and taught, and yit by diverse rewles, right as diverse p	Astske.txt
tung*				
	55	61,291	soneres, forgaf all forfetis. r20 And þis 3ere was ordeyned þat all plees at þe barre schuld be in Englisch tunge, and in no oþir tunge . And þis 3ere was Leonel mad duke of Clarens, and Edmund, his broþir, erl of Cambrig. It was ordeyned eke in þe parlement þ	Capgrave.txt
	56	61,286	d prisoneres, forgaf all forfetis. r20 And þis 3ere was ordeyned þat all plees at þe barre schuld be in Englisch tunge , and in no oþir tunge. And þis 3ere was Leonel mad duke of Clarens, and Edmund, his broþir, erl of Cambrig.	Capgrave.txt
	61	10,151	parlement, þat men of lawe, bothe of þe temporall & of holy chirche lawe, fro þat tyme forth shold plede in her moder tunge . And in þe same 3ere comen into Engelond thre kinges, that is to sey, þe King of Fraunce, the King r20 of Cypres, &	Brut2.txt
	231	12,192	in þilk while, þei schulden neuyr haue be write r5 of me; And leefir y hadde forto write suche maters and treuþis in lay tunge , vndir hope þat aftirward þei schulen come into latyn tunge, þan forto putte hem into perel forto neuer be of me	Pecdon2.txt
	232	12,154	wrytyng in lay tunge many maters and treuþis as þei camen to mynde ouer what y entendid bifore forto delyuere in lay tunge , lest if y schulde haue ouer passid hem forto not haue write hem in þilk while, þei schulden neuyr haue be write r5	Pecdon2.txt
	246	12,135	Ide seie in my conscience bifore god: 'þis now towchid is oon cause whi y delyuerid bi p30 wrytyng in lay tunge many maters and treuþis as þei camen to mynde ouer what y entendid bifore forto delyuere in lay tunge, lest if y	Pecdon2.txt
	265	62,149	ben not worþy to reherse, for nou3t	Wyclif2.txt

			groundiþ hem but nygromansye. it semyþ first þat þe wit of goddis lawe shulde be tau3t in þat tunge þat is more knowun, for þis wit is goddis word. whanne crist seiþ in þe gospel þat boþe heuene & erþe shulen passe but his	
	282	20,309	o prech of at tis tyme, þei be þe wordes of Seint Poul, writen e þe pistel o þis day & tus miche to seie on engliss tunge to 3our vndirstondyng', 'Crist hath offred Him-silf to God, Crist etc.' A gret clerk & 10 est Dionisius super val	Sermworc.txt
	313	36,050	ie;; where þat he may fynde / ony peple þat wole rede;; priue or apert / Goddis lawe in engliche;; þat is oure modir tunge / ancon he schal be sumned;; to come aforne hise iuggis / r5 to answeere what is seide to him;; & bring his book wiþ him /	Lantlit.txt
englis*				
	87	61,285	þis 3ere his jubilé, losed prisoneres, forgaf all forfetis. r20 And þis 3ere was ordeyned þat all plees at þe barre schuld be in Englisch tunge, and in no oþir tunge. And þis 3ere was Leonel mad duke of Clarens, and Edmund, his broþir, erl of Cambrig. It was	Capgrave.txt
	115	1,389	y haue founde and schal bi goddis grace fynde, wherbi he may amende þe doctryne whiche y am aboute to write in my englisch bokis and in my latyn bokis into soulis profite, y schal not lette him, but y schal þerfore þanke him; for god r2	Pecdon1.txt
	119	2,816	f þe book which y haue write in latyn, and which y calle 'þe book of lay mennys bookis', and þe book which y write in englisch callid 'þe afore crier', be wel rad and r35 vndirstonde, siþen a man schal þere se þat it is ful profitable and,	Pecdon.2.txt
	140	36,088	uggis / r5 to answeere what is seide to him;; & bring his book wiþ him / and eiþir he must forsake his book;; & reding of englische / & algatis he schal forswere;; to speke of holi writ þei sein lyue as þi fadir dide;; & þat is ynow for þe	Lantlit.txt
	211	62,106	p to þe chirche. p429 Capitulum 15=m=. r ant heere þe freris wiþ þer fautours seyn þat it is heresy to write þus goddis lawe in english , & make it knowun to lewid men. & fourty signes þat þey bringen forto shewe an heretik ben not worþy to reherse,	Wyclif2.txt

			for nou3	
	239	345	This tretis, divided in fyve p176 parties, wole I shewe thee under ful lighte rewles and naked 20 wordes in English ; for Latin ne canstow yit but smal, my lyte sone. But natheles, suffyse to thee these trewe conclusiouns in En	Astske.txt
	240	365	n English; for Latin ne canstow yit but smal, my lyte sone. But natheles, suffyse to thee these trewe conclusiouns in English , as wel as suffyseth to these noble clerkes Grekes these same conclusiouns in Greek, and to Arabiens in Arabik; and	Astske.txt
	291	52,100	lyueres'. 10 neuerles for it semeþ as inpertynent in gret party to many comune persones & symple soules, þat þis boke in english is writen to, as it is seid oft before, þerefore we passen ouere shortly takyng þereof þat semeþ profitable &	Mirbles.txt
	299	3,631	s or grace þereþorth'. pray he for 30 charite specialy for þe auctour, & þe drawere oute þereof, as it is writen here in english , to þe profite of symple & deuoute soules as it was seide before. And þus endiþ þe proheme, & after foloweþ þe	Mirbles.txt